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PTQ5172

RELEASED IN PART
B1, 1.4(B), 1.4(D)PAGE 01 CARACA 03906 01 OF 02 062347Z
ACTION WHA-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AID-00	CIAE-00	DODE-00	DOEE-00	PERC-00
	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00	VC-00	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00
	LAB-01	L-00	VCE-00	AC-01	NSAE-00	OMB-01	OPIC-01
	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00	IRM-00
	SSO-00	TRSE-00	USIE-00	EPAE-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	PRM-00
	DRL-02	G-00	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/007W		

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O 062249Z DEC 02
 FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
 TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8869
 INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA PRIORITY
 AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY
 AMEMBASSY LIMA PRIORITY
 AMEMBASSY MEXICO PRIORITY
 AMEMBASSY QUITO PRIORITY
 AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO PRIORITY
 NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
 USCINCSO MIAMI FL PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CARACAS 003906

NSC FOR LLORENS
 USCINCSO ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/06/2012
 TAGS: PGOV, PREL, OAS, VE
 SUBJECT: STRIKE DAY FIVE: LOOKING FOR WAYS OUT?
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CLASSIFIED BY: DEPUTY CHIEF OF MISSION, FREDERICK B. COOK, REASONS 1.5
 (B) & (D)

 SUMMARY

1. (C) DECEMBER 6 MARKED DAY FIVE OF THE OPPOSITION STRIKE TO
 PRESSURE THE CHAVEZ GOVERNMENT TO ACCEPT AN ELECTORAL
 SOLUTION. GOVERNMENT SUPPORTERS PLAN TO MARCH DECEMBER 7, AS
 DOES THE OPPOSITION. PDVSA REMAINS THE KEY FACTOR, WITH
 SHIPPING HALTED IN THE WEST AND GASOLINE SHORTAGES APPEARING.
 THERE HAS BEEN SOME VIOLENCE BETWEEN AUTHORITIES AND

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ANTI-CHAVEZ DEMONSTRATORS IN CARACAS, AND AN ATTACK ON
NEWSPAPER OFFICES IN MARACAY BY PRO-GOVERNMENT SUPPORTERS
LEFT TWO INJURED. AFTER A WEEK WITHOUT FORMAL DIALOGUE, OAS
SECRETARY GENERAL CESAR GAVIRIA WAS SCHEDULED TO MEET WITH
KEY GOV AND OPPOSITION NEGOTIATORS DECEMBER 6. THE NATIONAL
ASSEMBLY (NA) FIRST VICE PRESIDENT RAFAEL SIMON JIMENEZ
PROPOSED AN AMENDMENT OF THE CONSTITUTION TO ALLOW FOR EARLY
ELECTIONS. END SUMMARY.

STRIKE CONTINUES, OIL SITUATION WORSENS

2. (C) BUOYED BY THE SUPPORT FROM PETROLEOS DE VENEZUELA
(PDVSA), OPPOSITION LEADERS CARRIED THE STRIKE CALL INTO DAY
FIVE, DECEMBER 6. MIMICKING THE OPPOSITION, WHICH HAS USED
THE PDVSA BUILDING IN CHUAO AS A RALLYING POINT, CHAVEZ

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SUPPORTERS REMAIN IN FRONT OF THE PDVSA BUILDING IN LA
CAMPINA DECEMBER 6. THEY PLAN TO MARCH DECEMBER 7 FROM PLAZA
EL VALLE TO AVENIDA BOLIVAR. OPPOSITION SUPPORTERS CONTINUE
TO GATHER IN SUPPORT OF THE STRIKE AT THE PDVSA BUILDINGS IN
CHUAO, JUST A FEW MILES OF LA CAMPINA. THEY ALSO PLAN TO
MARCH DECEMBER 7 IN THE SAME DIRECTION AS THE GOV SUPPORTERS,
BUT TO A DIFFERENT LOCATION.

3. (C) EMBOFFS OBSERVED LITTLE CHANGE IN THE RETAIL AND
COMMERCE SECTORS, BUT THE BANKING AND FINANCE SECTOR CLOSED.
PDVSA REMAINS KEY. ALREADY, MARACAIBO AIRPORT TEMPORARILY
RAN OUT OF GAS, AIRPORTS IN VALENCIA, MATURIN, AND MARGARITA
REPORT THEIR FUEL RESERVES ARE REACHING "CRITICALLY LOW
LEVELS," AND CARS ARE BEGINNING TO LINE UP AT GAS STATIONS
AROUND THE COUNTRY. [REDACTED]
TOLD THE AMBASSADOR ARAGUA AND CARABOBO STATES RAN OUT OF GAS
DECEMBER 5 AND HAVE NOT BEEN RESUPPLIED.

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STAND OFF CONTINUES

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5. (C) ANTI-CHAVEZ SUPPORTERS CAME OUT THE NIGHT OF DECEMBER 5 WITH A HALF-HOUR LONG "CACEROLAZO" PROTEST (BANGING POTS AND PANS, HONKING HORNS, ETC.), AND CHAVEZ SUPPORTERS RESPONDED WITH THEIR OWN LATER IN THE EVENING. 200-300 CHAVEZ SUPPORTERS (PRESS REPORTS CALLED THEM BOLIVARIAN CIRCLES) IN ARAGUA STATE DECEMBER 5 ATTACKED THE OFFICES OF NEWSPAPERS EL SIGLO AND EL ARAGUENO IN MARACAY WITH ROCKS, BOTTLES, AND OTHER DEBRIS, LEAVING TWO INJURED AND PREVENTING THE NEWSPAPERS FROM PUBLISHING.

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GAVIRIA TALKS MAY BE BACK ON

6. (C) AFTER A WEEK WITHOUT FORMAL DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE DEMOCRATIC COORDINATING COMMITTEE (DCC), THE TWO SIDES MAY BE READY TO RETURN TO THE TALKS.

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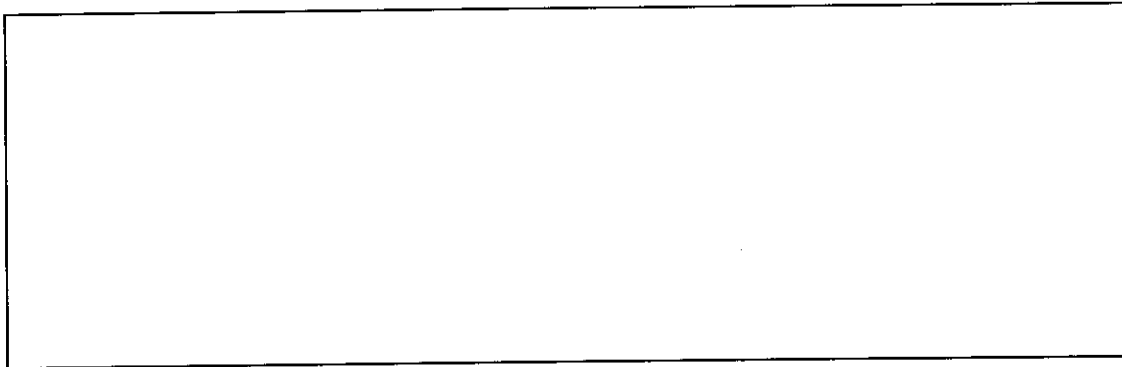
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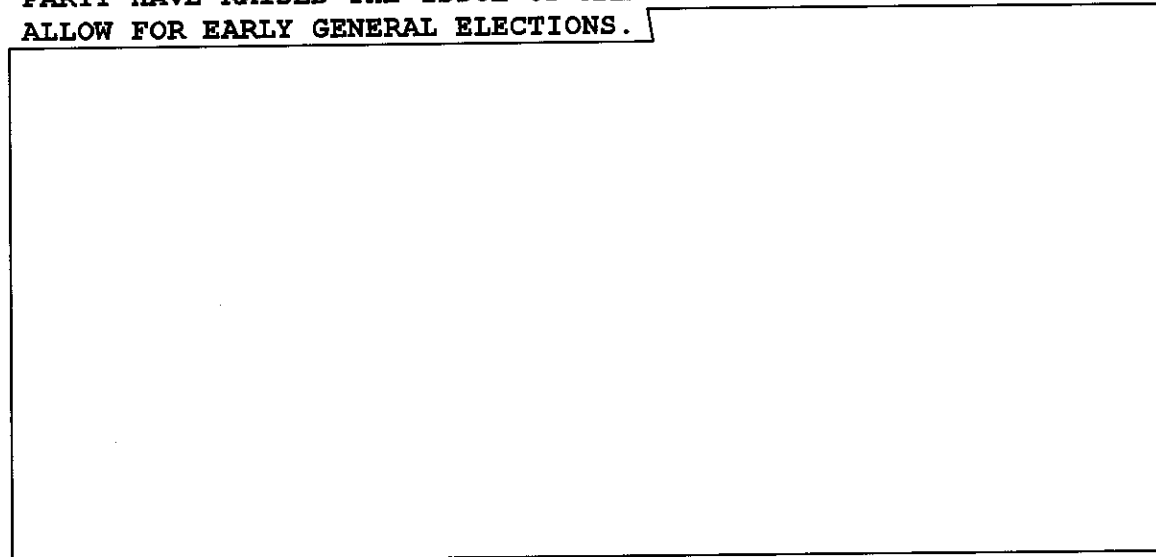


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NATIONAL ASSEMBLY JUMPS IN THE MIX

7. (C) NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (NA) FIRST VICE PRESIDENT RAFAEL
SIMON JIMENEZ AND OTHER DEPUTIES WITHIN THE PODEMOS POLITICAL
PARTY HAVE RAISED THE ISSUE OF AMENDING THE CONSTITUTION TO
ALLOW FOR EARLY GENERAL ELECTIONS.

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COMMENT

8. (C) THE OIL SECTOR IS THE FOCUS ON DAY FIVE OF THE
OPPOSITION'S STRIKE, LEAVING MANY SCRAMBLING TO FIND A WAY
OUT OF THE GOVERNMENT-OPPOSITION STAND OFF.

B1

NOTE: AS WE COMPLETE THIS CABLE, SHOTS HAVE BEEN FIRED ON
PLAZA FRANCIA IN THE ALTAMIRA NEIGHBORHOOD OF CARACAS. THERE
ARE MEDIA REPORTS OF SOME 10-15 PEOPLE INJURED AND TWO
APPARENT DEATHS.
SHAPIRO

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